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Literature and Society - Dr. Sherry

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 **Drinking Effects on Grades   
Problem –**

In today's society, college is not only looked at as place to further ones education, but also looked at as a big party. When you speak of college to somebody that is still in High School they think of drinking alcohol and partying due to the many movies and TV shows that paint a picture and portray stereotypes on colleges. College used to be looked at as a prestigious place to go to gain more knowledge about a specific subject and in return could get you a better job. Does drinking affect the grades of college students? In this paper I will investigate these questions using data I collected in the form of interviews and how a student manages his or her time on the weekends. Then I can draw a conclusion on whether drinking negatively affects grades, positively affects grades, or doesn't affect them at all.  
**Background –**

The negative effects from college student alcohol use continue to impact individuals and the surrounding community at almost every institution of higher education in the United States (Hughes 2012). In college, most students will drink or at least be offered a drink throughout their time attending the university. One reason that drinking is so popular in college is because everybody will be 21 eventually while attending college, which makes the access to alcohol a lot easier, especially if a student knows somebody that is of age to buy it for them. Throughout my personal experience I don't know any college student that has never drank at least once in their time at college, therefore the frequency of drinking could also be taken into account when drawing conclusions. It is easier to find somebody that does drink on a college campus rather than somebody that does not drink. Studies show that 75-85% of students that live on campus have drunk in the dorms in the past month (Pedersen 2009). Drinking in the dorms is extremely risky because it could get the student not only kicked off of campus, but out of the school as well. This shows what risks underage students take just to drink alcohol, which could be because of the way they thought college would be due to television and movies, or peer pressure.

* How does drinking affect the grades of students?
* Does drinking on weekdays affect grades more than only drinking on weekends?
* What causes students to drink?
* Does being a part of a club, sport, or Greek life affect the amount of drinking?

**Method –**

To find answers to the questions asked above, I interviewed students which lead to me asking about their schedule on the weekends and how they spent every hour of their day. One question that I asked students was how they spent their free time during the weekdays/weekends to better understand what most students did on a daily basis. Another question that I asked them was if they drink alcohol on a weekly basis. This it allowed me to interview people who drink and who don't drink, asking them the same questions and comparing their answers to find if there was a difference in responses. Also I got to compare the schedules on the weekend of the two groups of people.   
**Findings –**

1The broad results of my findings were that most people went out on weekends and drank alcohol with a group of people. However, those who didn't, put more time into schoolwork and some just played video games. 2One specific person I interviewed was a male, sophomore, and mostly a B and A student. He was a Criminal Justice major and chose this school strictly for academic purposes because it has a good program for his major. Due to Criminal Justice being his major he rarely drinks because if he gets in trouble it could ruin his whole future. Instead, he spends his free time during the week playing intramural football, doing school work, and playing video games. During the weekend he either goes home, goes to visit his girlfriend, she comes to visit him, or he just plays games in his room. Since he started attending Bloomsburg University he said “I have been offered to drink and go out almost every weekend by his roommate and friends.” 3However, only once has he ever gone out and drunk. The next person I interviewed was a male, sophomore, and mostly a C and B student. His major is business in which he has some interest but is mainly doing it because of the influence his parents had on his decision to go to school. He pledged to a Frat in the spring semester of his freshman year and is now very busy with doing Greek life activities. He said during pledging it brought his grades down a lot because of all the time he had to put towards it, but they got a little better since he has been in the Frat due to mandatory library time. Since he is in a Frat, he drinks more often than he did before he joined because of events that they have with other frats and sororities during the weeknights. Sometimes he sleeps through his classes from being too tired to get up because drinking. Drinking on the weekends is also something that he does every weekend unless he goes home. He has always partaken in drinking on the weekends since he was a freshman, but only started drinking on the week nights since he joined his frat. This is the only person that I had interviewed that said he drinks on the weeknights, and it is strictly due to the fact that he is in a frat because he never drank on weeknights before he joined. The last person I interviewed was a female, junior, and Dean’s List student. She has a dual major of Early Childhood and Special Education, which dramatically influenced her decision to come to Bloomsburg University because the college has an excellent program for those majors. Also, since she is from the city, the country-like environment of Bloomsburg was a plus too, but it isn't completely in the middle of nowhere and still will be a fun school to attend due to the nightlife. Even though she would be kicked out of her majors and it could greatly affect her future, she still chooses to drink. However, since has two majors, she takes 6 classes a semester rather than the normal 5. Being that she takes more classes, she has more work, which in turn takes up all of her time during the week doing schoolwork. Doing all of her work during the week leads to her weekend nights being free, which is when she decides to drink and go out. Since she was a freshman she has always gone out on the weekends. That being said, no matter how busy somebody may be, as long as they manage their time wisely they can always have time to themselves in which they can do whatever they please.  
**Conclusion –**

Based on the data that I collected, it is not uncommon for students at Bloomsburg University to drink alcohol on a weekly basis. Although the time and place may vary depending on the student, they are still partaking in the weekend festivities. "The direct effect of drinking on GPA is uniformly negative (Wolaver 2007)." I agree with Wolavers’ findings because the person I interviewed that drinks during the week has lower grades than the two others that do not drink during the week. Since he drinks during the week it affects his attendance in class negatively as well, which in return, puts him behind in class by missing information that is covered when he is not present. I believe that drinking negatively affects your GPA if you are not careful about when you do it and how much work you have to do before you make the choice to drink. However, there are special cases like the one female I interviewed that does chose to drink and gets better grades than the person that doesn't drink at all. From my research I can conclude that for the most part, drinking does affect the grades of college students negatively.

Works Cited

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